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THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST
CONSEQUENCES OF THE IRAQI OCCUPATION
OF AND AGGRESSION AGAINST KUWAIT
THE SITUATION IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL
TERRORISM

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-first year

Letter dated 17 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its sixtieth session, held at Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 7 and 8 September 1996 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33, 53, 56 and 151, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Salim Bin Mohammed AL-KHUSSAIBY
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

[Original: Arabic]

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its sixtieth session, held in Riyadh on 7 and 8 September 1996

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its sixtieth regular session at the seat of its secretariat in Riyadh on 7 and 8 September 1996 under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid Bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jasim Bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the full range of political, economic and security issues as well as recent developments at the inter-Arab and international levels.

The Council took note of the visit to the Republic of Yemen by His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdul-Aziz, Second Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence and Aviation and Inspector-General of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It commended the visit and the positive impact it had had on the bilateral relations of the two countries by promoting cooperation between them for the benefit of their peoples in accordance with the policies of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd Bin Abdul-Aziz, King of Saudi Arabia, and His Excellency Lieutenant-General Ali Abdullah Saleh, President of the Republic of Yemen. The Council views the visit as an affirmation of the strength of existing relations and of the desire of the Governments and peoples of the two countries to place those relations on a firm and unequivocal basis as a contribution to the strengthening of security and stability in all parts of the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region.

Iraq's compliance with the Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression against Kuwait

The Council reviewed the alarming developments affecting the situation in northern Iraq and expressed its deep concern at the repercussions that situation might have on the region given the threat it poses to international peace and security.

The Council condemned in the strongest terms the intervention of certain neighbouring States in northern Iraq. It called upon such States to desist, immediately and entirely, from interfering in the internal affairs of Iraq, and it affirmed its established position that Iraq's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity must be preserved.

The Council affirms that it is important for the firm and cohesive political stance taken by the Coalition countries to be a unified one, and it expresses its support for and appreciation of the efforts made by them that have had a major impact on the adoption of all the measures necessary for the implementation of the Security Council resolutions relating to Iraq's aggression against Kuwait. It renews its support for all the efforts made and all the measures taken by the Coalition countries with a view to securing Iraq's full and meticulous compliance with all the relevant Security Council resolutions, particularly those relating to the release of Kuwaiti and third-country prisoners and detainees, the return of property, compliance with the compensation mechanism and full cooperation with the efforts of the United Nations Special Commission entrusted with the elimination of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The Council also reviewed the efforts made by the United Nations to promote the speedy implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995), which culminated in the memorandum of understanding of 20 May 1996 concerning the provision of humanitarian supplies and medicines in order to mitigate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

The Council, stressing that Iraq must honour the resolutions of the United Nations and avoid any action that may bring further suffering to the Iraqi people, calls upon Iraq to cooperate with the United Nations in order to expedite the creation of suitable conditions for the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995).

Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and the question of the occupation of the three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates

The Council reviewed recent developments in relations between the GCC States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and the question of the latter's occupation of the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, three islands belonging to the United Arab Emirates. It noted that the Iranian Government was continuing to take measures aimed at perpetuating its occupation of the islands by pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by use of force, the most recent such measure being the opening on 31 August 1996 of a fish-processing plant and warehouse on Abu Musa. This indicates the insistence of the Iranian Government on further pursuing its unwarranted and provocative measures. The

Council reiterated its profound regret that the Islamic Republic of Iran was maintaining its refusal to respond positively to the repeated, earnest and sincere calls for a peaceful resolution of the dispute that have been made by the United Arab Emirates, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Damascus Declaration countries, the Council of the League of Arab States and the Arab Summit Conference. The Council further expressed its disapproval of the successive Iranian measures taken on the islands and its continuing concern at the possible consequences of the Iranian Government's insistence on pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force. Such measures represent a violation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates and an infringement of its rights with respect to the islands. They also jeopardize security and stability in the region and are incompatible with the principles of good-neighbourliness and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity as they concern the States of the region.

The Council renewed its affirmation of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates over the islands in question and of its unconditional support for all the peaceful measures the United Arab Emirates is taking with a view to restoring the exercise of that sovereignty. It expressed satisfaction that the United Nations Security Council has agreed to retain the question of the islands in the list of matters of which the Council is seized. The Ministerial Council again appealed to the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the islands, to desist from pursuing a policy of imposing faits accomplis by force, to suspend the implementation of any measures taken unilaterally, to remove any facilities unilaterally installed on the islands and to resolve the ongoing dispute in a peaceful manner in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, including agreement to refer the question to the International Court of Justice.

In this context, the Council expressed concern at the continuing endeavour of the Islamic Republic of Iran to acquire and build an arsenal of weapons of mass destruction and to have a conventional and non-conventional weapons capability that surpasses its legitimate defence needs. Accordingly, in light of the international strategic importance of the Gulf region, the Council renews its call to the international community and the relevant international organizations to make an active effort to transform that region into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The Council expressed satisfaction that the State of Bahrain is experiencing calm and stability as a result of the judicious measures it has taken to strengthen security. These measures enjoyed the support of the GCC States, the League of Arab States and the recent Arab Summit Conference held in Cairo in light of the fact that Bahrain's security is part and parcel of the security of the GCC States.

The Council affirmed the importance for relations between the States of the region of respect for the principles of good-neighbourliness and non-interference in the internal affairs of others, and it stressed the need for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each of them to be respected if security and stability are to be achieved in the Gulf region.

The peace process in the Middle East

The Council reviewed developments in the peace process in the Middle East and the meetings that had recently taken place between the parties concerned, and it expressed the hope that the forward momentum of the peace process would be renewed. The Council nevertheless continues to view the policy guidelines announced by the Israeli Government with deep concern, given that they reflect an insistence on perpetuating the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, on maintaining the annexation of East Jerusalem, on rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian State, on refusing to withdraw from the Golan and on retaining and expanding the Jewish settlements in Arab territory. The Council expressed deep concern that such Israeli policies and policy statements might undermine the peace process and bring about a return of tension with all its attendant dangers and possible consequences.

The final communiqué of the Arab Summit Conference and the positions consistently adopted by the GCC States call for a just, comprehensive and lasting peace based on the terms of reference of the Madrid Peace Conference, and they stress the necessity and importance of continuing the peace process and of the concrete implementation of all the agreements thus far concluded. This includes the fulfilment by Israel of its commitment to withdraw its forces from Hebron and the resumption of the final-status negotiations with the Palestinian National Authority and of negotiations on the other tracks, given that peace is a strategic choice to which there is no alternative. The Council hopes that Israel will make the same solemn commitment without procrastination and without resort to language of defiance and confrontation and that it will endeavour to carry the peace process through to completion so as to restore the legitimate rights of all parties and guarantee the balanced and equal security of all the States of the region in fulfilment of the aspirations of its peoples to embark upon an era of economic and social development.

The Council, calling for the resumption of the negotiations on all tracks, affirms that the achievement of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East, in implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1987) and the principle of land for peace, will require: the complete withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian territories, including Arab Jerusalem; the ability of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State with its capital at Jerusalem; complete Israeli withdrawal from the Syrian Arab Golan to the boundary of 4 June 1967; and complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the Western Bekaa to the internationally recognized boundaries.

Commending the firmly established international consensus in support of the peace process, as embodied in the statements issued by the European Union at its Florence meeting, by the group of seven industrialized countries at its Lyon summit meeting, by the Casablanca Islamic Summit Conference and by the Cartagena Summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Council urges the co-sponsors of the Madrid Peace Conference, the United States of America and the Russian Federation, to continue to make the most strenuous efforts to ensure that the peace process continues and that the negotiations are resumed and continued until the desired peace is achieved. The Council further renews its

call to the international community to honour the undertakings given with respect to the provision of economic assistance to the Palestinian people.

The Council affirmed that Israel must accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and submit all of its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency inspection regime. It renews its call for the Middle East, including the Gulf region, to be transformed into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, while stressing that it is the achievement of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East that will bring real security to all the States of the region.

Extremism, violence and terrorism

Affirming that extremism, violence and terrorism are global phenomena that are not restricted to any particular people or region, the Council renews its condemnation of such phenomena and its categorical rejection of all forms of violence and terrorism, particularly those that are detrimental to security and stability in the region. It calls upon the international community to coordinate its efforts to halt acts of violence and terrorism, ensure that the perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice, and prevent extremist and terrorist elements from using the territory of any State for purposes of obtaining funding or arms supplies and from availing themselves of the media to incite to acts of violence or terrorism.

The Council expressed its condemnation of the criminal terrorist bombing that took place at Khobar, Saudi Arabia, on 25 June 1996. At the same time, it affirmed its full support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in combating terrorism and expressed confidence in the ability of the Kingdom's security agencies to cope with such acts and ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice. The Council wished the Government and people of Saudi Arabia continued security and stability under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.

The Council renews its support for Bahrain and for the measures it has taken to strengthen its security and stability. It does so given the principle of the shared destiny of the GCC countries, the global character of their security and the concern that their stability should not be weakened or undermined.

The Council recalled the decisions taken by the GCC Supreme Council at its sixteenth session, held in Muscat, which stressed the importance of cooperation among GCC States in countering biased media campaigns directed against any member State and the need for compliance with the foreign media controls and with the code of media integrity, which calls for the adoption of common positions against information media and newspapers defaming the GCC countries.

Developments in the dispute between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea concerning the Hanish islands

The Council reviewed developments in the context of the dispute between the Republic of Yemen and Eritrea concerning the Hanish islands, and it expressed its appreciation of the mediation efforts being made by France in this regard. While the Council expresses satisfaction that Eritrea has withdrawn from Lesser

Hanish Island, it reaffirms its position calling for compliance with the Agreement on Principles signed by the two parties on 21 May 1996 with a view to the peaceful resolution of the dispute through international arbitration so that the area may enjoy security and stability and no threat is posed to international navigation in the Red Sea.

Developments in the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The Council reviewed ongoing developments in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It reaffirmed the importance of the effective implementation of all the provisions of the Dayton agreement if peace, security and stability are to be assured for all parties concerned. It urges the international community and the Serb and other leaders to assist in the attempts being made to bring before the International Tribunal at The Hague all of those who have committed crimes against humanity, genocide or serious violations of international humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia.

Economic matters

In the economic field, the Council reviewed the reports of the ministerial committees on their recent meetings and referred a number of other matters to the relevant ministerial committees. The Council decided to convene the eighth joint meeting of the Ministerial Council and the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation at the end of October 1996 in order to consider the question of a unified customs tariff.

In the context of the negotiations between the GCC States and the United States of America, the Council took note of a secretariat report on the first meeting of the GCC-United States economic working groups, held in Washington from 26 to 28 June 1996. It decided that the working groups should continue to operate with a view to completing their discussions on trade and investment issues of concern to the two parties.